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MEMORANDUM FOR:

[redacted]  
Special Assistant to the President  
for Science and Technology

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Your memorandum dated March 5, 1968 discussing the completion of Project ARGO has been received and the results of the project have been evaluated by cleared personnel of this Department and reported to me.

I concur in the desirability of at least a pilot continuing activity along the lines initiated by Project ARGO and, in accordance with your request, name as the Commerce Department member of the Steering Committee,

[redacted] Director of the National Environmental Satellite

Center of the Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA). His

alternate will be [redacted] Chief of ESSA's Plans and Requirements Division.

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Other than the information presented in the ARGO ~~Report~~ and the general comments which follow, we are not in a position at this time to provide ~~any~~ additional detailed information. We have evaluated the ARGO conclusions from the stand point of the interests of the Department of Commerce and concur.

With regard to the evaluation report you requested, the Department of Commerce has concluded that this general class of system is and will be an important source of environmental data, although there are serious deficiencies in the present system for our purposes, particularly the security classification and the lack of color or other multi-spectral capability. At the same time, even with these deficiencies, the system may be of value

assuming that we may obtain ready access to existing U.S. coverage and that some degree of priority will be given to the needs of the civilian agencies in the planning of future missions.

Principal areas of immediate Department of Commerce application are mapping, hydrology, and oceanography. Mapping is the subject of a separate study and will not be discussed here, although it will be an area of continuing interest to the Department. In the other two areas, we propose to initiate experimental use of the system on a pilot basis using personnel based at the National Environmental Satellite Center. For the immediate future, studies would involve only the use of material already in the files. The first tasks will be the definition of specific pilot studies that we would wish to undertake, more detailed evaluation of requirements and applications, and additional analysis of cost effectiveness of <sup>various</sup> applications.

At a later date, we would propose the following types of data requirements for operational use:

Hydrology - Coverage of the principal snow covered mountainous areas of the United States approximately six times between January and June with KH4 or KH7 where possible.

Oceanography and Hydrography - Coverage of the principal harbors and estuaries of the United States with KH-7 once every five years.

← Both of these applications were covered in the ARGO report as to feasibility and benefits.

We recognize that Project ARGON was only the beginning of an era when satellite data will be regularly used in support of the missions of the civilian agencies. I am pleased that members of this Department were participants in the pioneering effort and assure you of our interest in cooperating with you in the continuing pursuit of better and more cost effective ways to use our national facilities and resources for the public good.

Sincerely yours,

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